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# The process of Rural Development in Bulgaria in examples

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Vyara Stefanova

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Building CSOs Capacity on

EU Nature-related Policies Study Tour

## General information

**Territory:** total area 111,000 km<sup>2</sup>

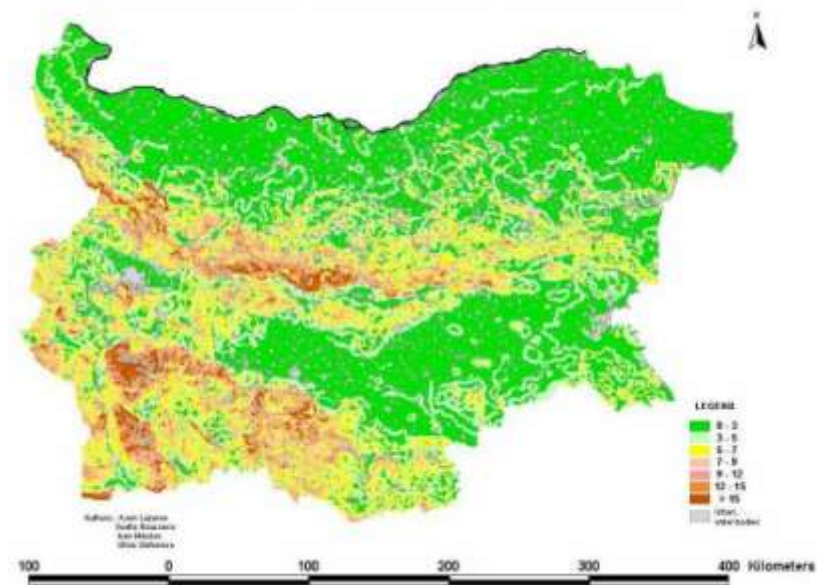
**Agricultural land:** 50.7% of the total territory

**Forests** cover 33.1% of the total territory

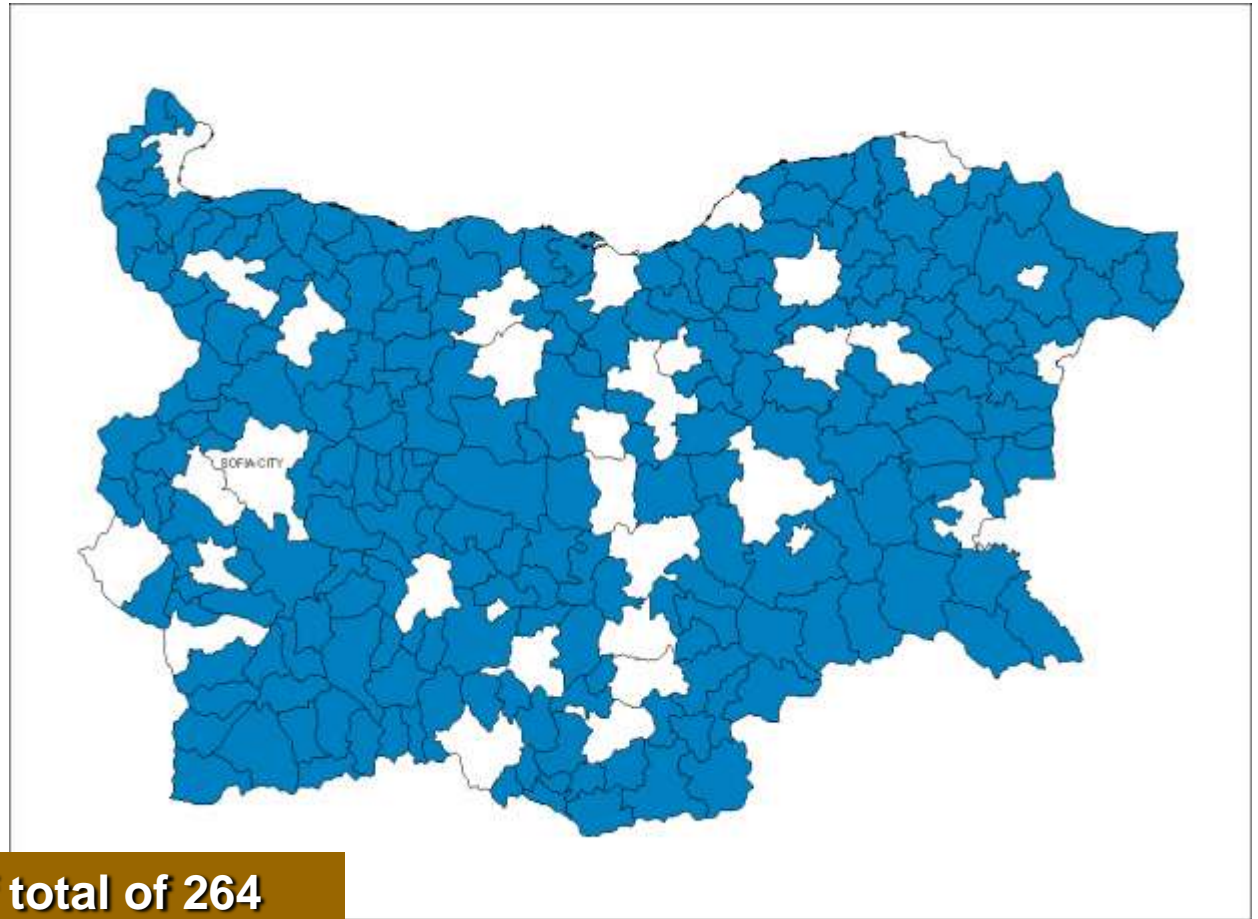
**Utilized agricultural land:** 5.3 million ha (48 % of country territory)

4% of the **UAA** are perennial crops

34% of the **UAA** is grassland



## Rural areas - national definition – no settlement with population over 30 000



231 municipalities out of total of 264  
81% of total country territory;  
42% of total population;

# Milestones of Rural Development Policy in Bulgaria

- 1995 – Law on protection of agricultural producers
- 1997 – First agricultural report
- 1998 – Law on support of agricultural producers
- 1999 – Sectoral analysis for SAPARD

1995

- 2004 – Concept for Rural Development for 2007-2013
- 2005 – National Action Plan for organic agriculture for the period 2006-2013
- 2005-2007 National Strategy Plan and Program for Rural Development for 2007-2013

2000

2007

- 2000 – National Agriculture and Rural Development Plan under SAPARD 2000-2006
- 2003 – National Agri-environmental Program

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# Agricultural and Rural Policy Developments in Bulgaria – how it started

- 1999 - Pilot Project on support of the milk sector in Dobrich region
  - 2000 - National Agriculture and rural development Plan for the period 2000-2006 under SAPARD
  - **2001 - Start of the SAPARD Programme**
  - 2002 - Development of 3 integrated regional programmes
  - **2003 - National Agri-environmental Programme**
  - 2003 - MAF/UNDP Pilot project on Leader approach
  - 2004 - Concept for rural development 2007-2013
  - **2005 - National Strategy and National Action plan for organic agriculture for the period 2006-2013 drafted (adopted in 2007)**
  - **2005 - National pilot scheme for LFA support**
  - **2006 – SAPARD AE measure first implemented**
  - **2007 – LFA measures implemented**
  - **2008 - NSP and RDP for the period 2007-2013 implemented**
  - **2008 - RDP AE payments measure implemented**
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# **Agricultural and Rural Developments in Bulgaria in terms of financial allocation**

- **National support for agriculture 1995-2000 – 100 MEUR for the whole period**
  - **SAPARD Programme 2000-2006 - total amount of the financial allocation for the period – 556 MEUR, of which 417 MEUR from EC**
  - **Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 – total amount of the financial allocation for the period – 3 242 MEUR, of which 2 609 MEUR from EC**
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# SAPARD RESULTS

- 3 509 projects contracted (202 for AE)
  - 790 projects not implemented by the beneficiaries or cancelled by the PA
  - 150 MEUR lost – non-implemented projects or refunding (out of 556)
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# Lessons learnt from SAPARD

## Policy design and implementation

- SAPARD introduced **integrated rural development policy** as a blend of sector-territory-community development policies;
  - SAPARD introduced **partnership with the economic and social NGOs and local actors** as a continuous process throughout policy making and programme management;
  - SAPARD introduced the approach of **multi-annual programming with priority setting and continuous monitoring and evaluation** to improve and guide programme implementation;
  - SAPARD allowed Bulgarian institutions to acquire the responsibility for programme management and **build internal expertise and capacity to implement, monitor and evaluate such programmes.**
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# Lessons learnt from SAPARD

- Establishment of **Permanent working groups** for each measure measure under the SAPARD MC:
  - allowed active participation of all stakeholders in preparation and revision of the measures;
  - early identification of emerging problems.
- Discussions in **SAPARD Monitoring Committee meetings** - important tool for **adjustment** of the Programme implementation.
- Bulgarian agricultural producers, food processing companies and rural municipalities **accumulated significant experience** in implementation of EU projects.
- **Publicity and information measures are very important**
  - Guidelines for implementation of the measures; Seminars, courses and forums for training of trainers Information seminar; Leaflets; Information centers; National Agricultural Advisory services – special informational seminars “Door to Door” and “Teams on Wheels”

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# SAPARD Problems

- Lack of funds for **pre-financing of operations**;
  - Lack of **understanding of the procedures** by the beneficiaries;
  - Lack of **strategic vision in the municipalities** – non-sustainable projects, no integrated projects, no active local participation (projects are developed without consultation with local stakeholders), etc.
  - **Quantitative assessment** \via check-lists\ vs. qualitative assessment;
  - Quality of Risk analysis;
  - Collection of **data for monitoring & reporting** purposes was often viewed as “secondary” to contracting/project approval and payment of support – this coupled with high staff turnover (esp. at the SAPARD Agency) leads to deficiencies as regards regular & continual provision of reliable data;
  - **Qualitative data** on program results was provided almost **only by the mid-term evaluation** – in the absence of such data the analytical function of reporting may suffer.
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# SAPARD Problems – findings in the EC audit and OLAF reports

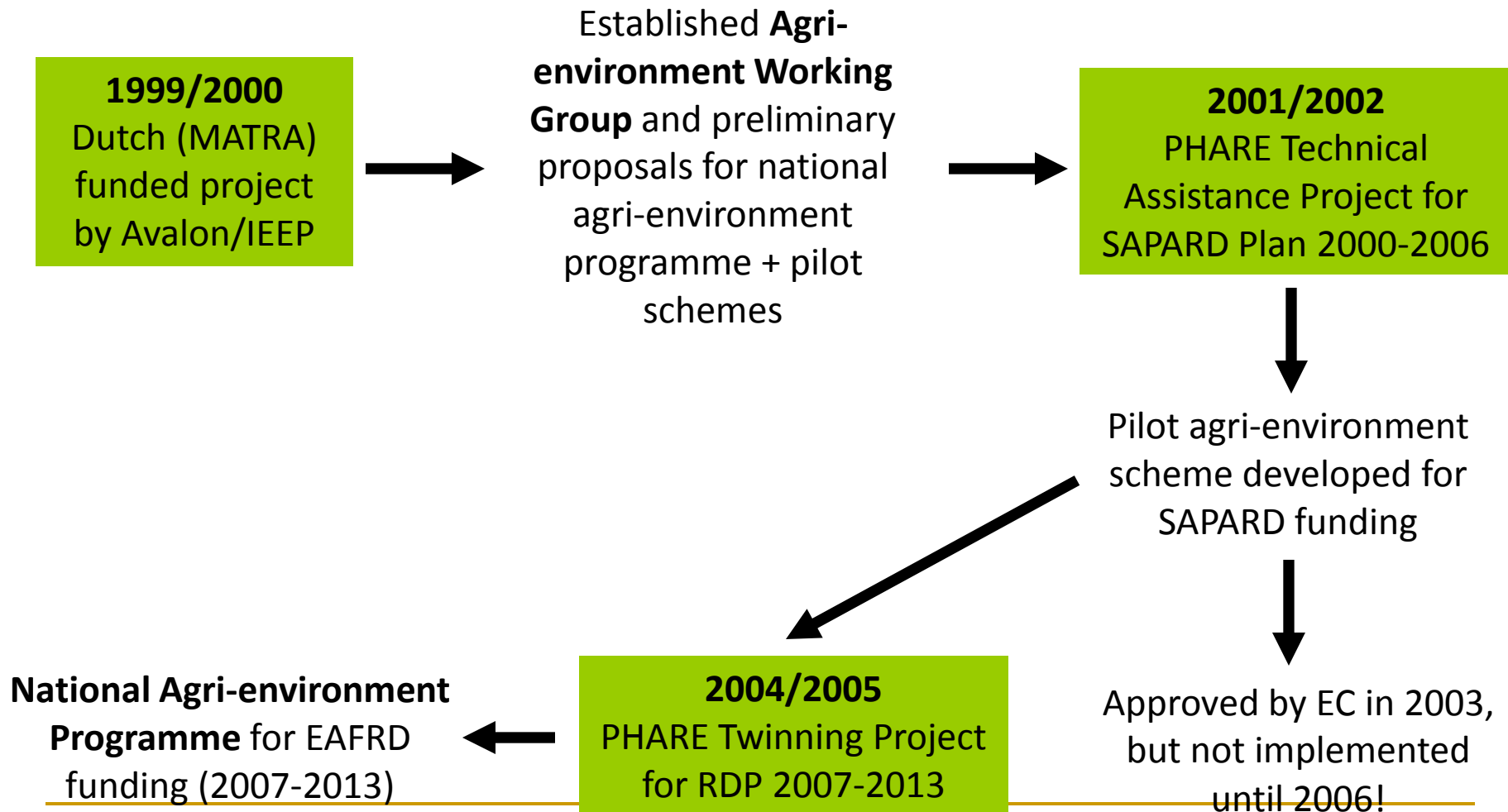
- Unreasonable prices (implementation of the three offer rule) – inflated prices (failure to utilize meaningful reference prices data base);
  - Irregular origin of equipment.
  - Second hand equipment.
  - Malfunctioned of Procurement \ 3-offers system;
  - Setting up artificial circumstances to avoid Program conditions (*for example: artificial split of one company to two linked companies – both of them applied to receive maximum support*).
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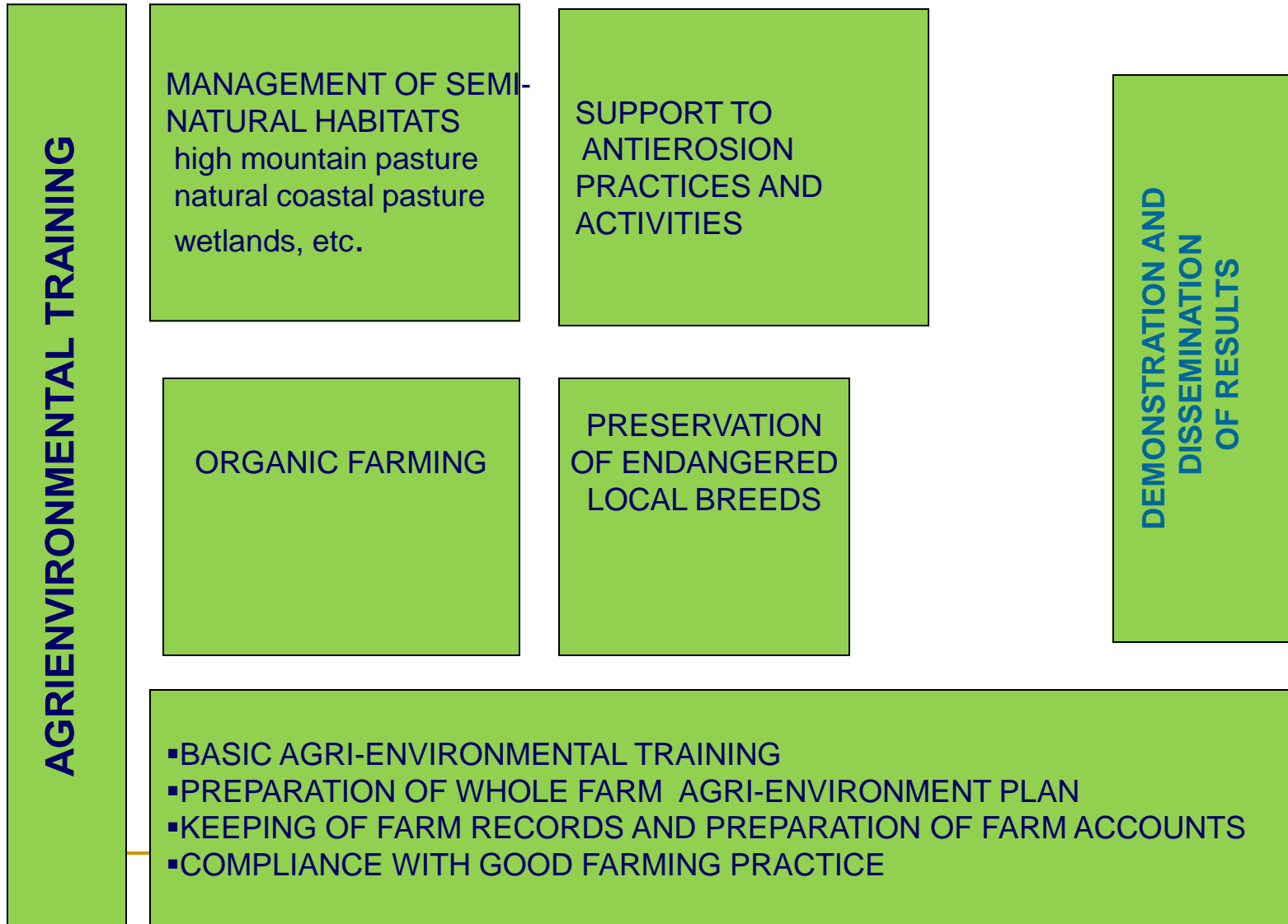
# Lessons Learned for participation of the stakeholders in the process of programming and implementation

- Wider consultation process in the Programme preparation and Programme management (programming working groups, steering evaluation group etc. ) needed;
  - Involvement of local experts with expertise on EU approaches;
  - Use of different donor projects EU Twinning, Technical Assistance, WB, UNDP, GEF for:
    - Learning by doing
    - Institutional development assistance);
    - Sector surveys and evaluation and local case studies
    - Expert assistance for the preparation of program documents.
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# Evolution of Agri-environment Programming in Bulgaria



# ALL FARMERS SHOULD UNDERTAKE THE BASIC WHOLE FARM PACKAGE PLUS AT LEAST ONE ACTIVITY FROM THE SUPPLEMENTARY PACKADGES, SUPPORTED BY AGRIENVIRONMENTAL TRAINING



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# Problems faced with SAPARD AE measure

- **Lack of relevant experience in the administrative authorities and stakeholders;**
  - **Lack of functional system of land parcel identification** – graphical versus numerical/cadastral for area based payments
  - **Huge delay between programming and implementation** – big disappointment for the stakeholders and beneficiaries
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## Bulgaria used **paper-based cadastral maps** in 2006 and 2007:

- LPIS was still under-development
- Cadastral maps were easily available and familiar to farmers
- Cadastral maps gave a unique number and gross area



### BUT the System:

- Was not appropriate for **continuation** or **adaptation** to future agri-environment schemes, and
- Did not develop **relevant experience** and **long-term capacity** amongst administrators



# Lessons learnt(1)

- Start as early as possible with **national schemes** in order to gain the relevant experience
- Develop the **schemes simple** and test them in **a pilot region** – piloting is important not only for the programming period but also for implementation
- Start the agri- environmental **training of farmers and relevant authorities** as early as possible
- Use the **bottom up and partnership approach** – working groups
- Active participation of stakeholders needed\-
- **test the rules for implementation of the measure before finalizing them**



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# National Agri-environment Programme for Bulgaria (2007-2013)

- Developed by Agri-environment Working Group (2005-2006) supported by EU Twinning project and extensive consultation with stakeholders
  - Based upon SAPARD pilot scheme, but with modified architecture
  - Annual application period: 1 March – 15 May
  - 5 year management agreements
  - Minimum area of 0.5 ha
  - Farmers must be registered with IACS
  - Obligatory training, but no “whole farm” planning
  - Increased number of sub-measures
  - Farmers only compensated for activities going beyond the baseline obligations
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## Axis 2: Agri-environment Payments

### High Nature Value Farmland Scheme (HNV)

Five packages (sub-measures):

**HNV 1:** Restoration and maintenance of undergrazed HNV Grassland

**HNV 2:** Restoration and Maintenance of Overgrazed HNV Grasslands

**HNV 3:** Maintenance of Waterfowl Habitats

**HNV 4:** Maintenance of Protected Species Habitats

**HNV 5:** Restoration of Riparian Habitats

### Landscape Features Scheme (LF)

Three packages (sub-measures):

**LF 1:** Lowland Mosaic Landscapes

**LF 2:** Creation, restoration and maintenance of Field Boundaries

**LF 3:** Maintenance of Traditional Orchards

### Traditional Livestock Breeding Scheme (LB)

Three packages (sub-measures):

**LB 1:** Preservation of Traditional Local Breeds

**LB 2:** Mountain Pastoralism

### Soil and Water Protection Scheme (SW)

Two packages (sub-measures):

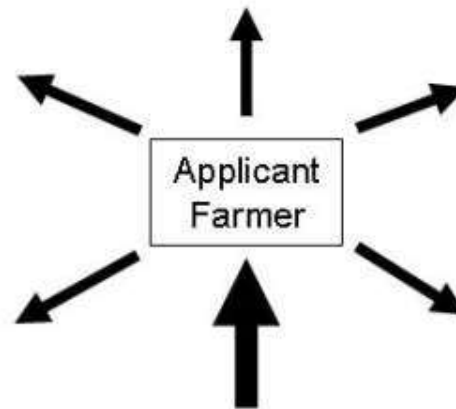
**SW 1:** Crop Rotations for Soil and Water Protection

**SW 2:** Control of Soil Erosion in Catchments

### Organic Farming Scheme (OF)

**OF 1:** Organic Farming Support

**OF 1C** – organic apiculture



**Agri-environment Training**  
*[Axis 1 – Vocational Training and Information Actions]*

Baseline obligations of “cross-compliance” (GAEC) + CoGAP + minimum fertiliser/pesticide requirements

## **Common farming characteristics in SR, MK, MN that can be supported by AE**

- Traditionally extensive character of upland farming;
- River valleys and plains are the main intensive agriculture regions
- Seasonal mountain grazing (short distance)
- Traditional local breeds and varieties
- Common grazing – common use of pastures
- Small scale mosaics around the villages
- Cow-calve system
- Sheep breeding

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# Common “AE type” support schemes – SR, MK, MN

- Organic farming
  - Support to local breeds
  - Support to local varieties
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- Support to shepherds salaries – MK
  - Support to mountain pastures – MN
  - Regional pastures support - SR
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## But:

- Lack of consultation and coordination process;
- No cadastre/maps especially for pastures; No LPIS;
- No multiannual agreements (5 years)
- No minimum baseline requirements;

## And:

**AE is not a priority for the national policy and IPARD**

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Viara\_mail@dir.bg

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# Group work

## The positive initiatives that I would like to take home

- Programming
- Legislation – environmental/agricultural and the link between them
- Implementation
- National/regional/local level or initiatives
- Others

## The mistakes that I would like to avoid

- Design of programming documents
  - Capacity building
  - Participation of the stakeholders in RD process
  - Implementations
  - Others
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